

RFQ- Facilitator Services

Santa Rosa County
Tourist Development

March 16, 2016

Submitted by:

Analytica

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March 16, 2016

Transmittal Letter

Proposal - **RFQ- Facilitator Services**

Santa Rosa County Procurement Department,
6495 Caroline Street Suite G,
Milton, Florida, 32570;

Due 10:00 a.m., March 22, 2016. A one (1) original, twelve (12) copies of the proposal, and one (1) CD/thumb-drive with the full proposal included, (each document must be in an individual PDF format file).

Dear Sirs:

I am pleased to submit Analytica's proposal to provide the requested facilitation services. Having developed over 50 strategic plans for public entities including Tourist Development Councils, I believe we are well qualified to provide such services. We are particularly experienced in work with County Governments at both elected and management levels, having worked in all areas of the state with rural and urban counties, large, medium and small counties.

Your format has been followed and all requested information provided. Please contact me if there is any additional information you need.

Cordially,

Herbert A. Marlowe, Jr., Ph.D.
Principal

Project Understanding.

The Santa Rosa County Tourist Development Council Board of Directors is seeking qualifications from qualified consultants to facilitate discussions and prepare a five year strategic plan for the organization. This plan will include goals and measurable objectives, as well as activities to accomplish the goals.

Proposal Elements

Consultant firm/individual background and experience

Analytica was established in 1991 as a sole proprietorship by Dr. Herbert Marlowe. It provides various organizational development services, including strategic planning, organizational design and program assessments and need studies, to primarily public sector clients. The firm has developed over 100 strategic plans for public, private and non-profit entities, primarily in Florida. Projects have been successfully completed in all regions of the state. Many of these projects address tourism and economic development strategy directly or as a sub-set of strategies addressing the full range of public policy topics that are impact tourism such as transportation, public safety, arts, culture and recreation infrastructure, and planning and development. Herb's resume is provided below. The firm's experience and project list are provided in the next section.

Herbert A. Marlowe, Jr.

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HMarlowe@aol.com; herb@analytica-group.com

Professional Experience

- Principal, Analytica, 1991 to present
- Assistant Research Scholar, Institute for Higher Education, College of Education, University of Florida, 1987-1990.
- Continuing Education Coordinator, Center for Training in the Environmental Occupations, University of Florida, 1984-1987.
- Director of Continuing Education, Adult Programs, Florida Mental Health Institute, Tampa, Florida. 1978-1984.
- Instructor, Adult Programs, Florida Mental Health Institute, Tampa, Florida. 1974-1978.
- Organizational Development Consultant, U.S. Navy. Newport, R.I. 1971-72.

- Yeoman, Mobile Construction Battalion 62, Gulfport MS and DaNang, Republic of Vietnam, 1969-1970.

Education

- Ph.D. College of Education, University of Florida, 1984. Dissertation: The structure of social intelligence.
- Ed.S. College of Education, University of Florida, 1974.
- M.E., College of Education, University of Florida, 1974.
- B.A.E. (High Honors), College of Education, University of Florida, 1968.

Professional Experience: With over thirty years of consulting experience, Herb has worked on a broad range of issues in a wide number of fields including: water supply and wastewater treatment, agriculture, health, mental health, human services, transportation, community redevelopment, economic development, downtown redevelopment, criminal justice, organizational re-structuring, human resource issues, recreation and culture, public utilities, tourism, race and cultural relations, science and engineering, marketing and development, and environmental. In each of these areas he has applied his particular skills to assist groups to analyze the issue, develop alternatives, and prioritize an action plan to move forward toward some shared goal.

Within this broad experience, Herb has developed particular expertise in the field of strategic planning. He has developed over 100 strategic plans in the areas of economic development, general government operations, health and human services, transportation, and environmental and water related issues.

Relevant publications or presentations:

- Kelton, R., Wingo, O., and Marlowe, H. 2006. Integrating strategic and business planning. Innovations in Local Government Conference. Dayton, OH.
- Marlowe, H.A., Arrington, L., Henry, T. and Watts, A. 2003. *Post disaster redevelopment plan*. Marathon, FL: Monroe County Government
- Nyhan, R. C and H. A. Marlowe, Jr., 1995. Performance measurement and Total Quality Management (TQM) in the public sector: Opportunities and challenges. *Public Productivity and Management Review* 18, (4) 333-347.
- Marlowe, H. A., R. C. Nyhan, L. Arrington and W. Pammer 1994. The re-ing of local government: Understanding and shaping governmental change. *Public Productivity and Management Review*, 17, 299-311.
 - Re-printed in: Watson, D. and Hasselt, W. (Eds) 2003. *Local Government Management*. New York. M.E. Sharpe. (A selection of the 30 best articles on local government management published in the American Society of Public Administration journals over the past 60 years).
- Marlowe, H. A. and Ashburn R. *Management and Supervision Skills*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board. 1985.
- Marlowe, H. A. and Ashburn, R. *Interpersonal Relationship Skills*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board. 1985.
- Marlowe, H.A. and Beaudet, B. Creating a high performance utility: The link between culture and organizational health. American Water Works Association Conference, 1992.
- Marlowe, H.A. and Beaudet, B. Creating self-renewing capabilities in a Water Utility: Lessons learned fro analysis and action in creating a learning organization. American Water Works Annual Conference. 1991.
- Marlowe, H.A. The learning organization: Implications for trainers. American Society for Training and Development Technical Conference. 1990
- Marlowe, H.A. and Beaudet, B. Workplace literacy in the Water industry. *American Water Works Journal*. 1992.

Experience with strategic planning and board facilitation, especially government affiliation

Analytica has developed over 50 strategic plans for public sector entities such as Tourist Development Councils (Palm Beach and Lee), county governments (Hillsborough, Pinellas, Lee among others), municipalities (DeLand, Pompano Beach, Fort Walton Beach, Doral among others), special taxing districts (The Children's Trust of Miami-Dade, The Children's Board of Hillsborough County for example) and multi-jurisdictional projects (such as water supply in Southwest Florida and Tampa Bay, tourism around Lake Okeechobee, health care delivery in the Florida Heartland counties).

Most of the strategic plans for coastal municipalities and counties have strong tourism development and economic development components which are developed as an integral component of overall strategy. In this work tourism and/or economic development strategy is developed in concert with strategies for transportation, water and sewer infrastructure, public safety, park and recreation facilities, arts and culture resources, workforce housing, and workforce development.

In addition to this broader context for tourism and economic development, Analytica has developed specific tourism and economic development plans. Examples of the firm's work here include a strategic plan for Environmental, Cultural and Heritage tourism for Volusia County; a beachfront and downtown revitalization strategy for Daytona Beach; an award-winning economic development strategy for the Glades region of Palm Beach County that included better visitor access to Lake Okeechobee and the development of trails around the lake; an economic development oriented transportation plan for Hillsborough County, management of economic development for Lawrenceville, Ga; strategic plans for rural counties (Baker, Gadsden, and Madison), a community perceptions study for the S. Walton TDC and facilitation of various economic summits (Palm Beach County, Round Rock, Tx).

The following chart provides a comprehensive summary of the firm's experience.

Strategy Development Projects	Project Description	Client*
Vision Plans		
	Vision Plan for Municipalities with extensive community engagement	Naples, Longboat Key, Palm Coast, Naples, Leesburg, DeLand, Fort Walton Beach, Panacea, Tallahassee, Canal Point, Ponce Inlet, Pembroke Pines, St. Augustine
	County/Regional Vision Plans	Palm Beach County, Alachua County, Leon County, Lake County, Osceola County
Strategic Plans	Municipalities	Deland, Round Rock, Tx; Fort Walton Beach, Palm Coast, Oviedo, Orlando, Loxahatchee Groves, Ocoee, Pompano Beach, Deerfield Beach, Doral
	Counties	Pinellas, Brevard, Collier, Hillsborough, Lee, Polk, Charlotte, Palm Beach Fire/Rescue
	Special districts	Miami-Dade Children's Trust, Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, Children's Board of Hillsborough County
	Regional/Inter-governmental bodies	Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority, Round Rock, Tx; Volusia Water Authority, Peace River Water Authority, Florida Heartland, Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, Health and Human Services Council, Pinellas, Charleston SC Education Alliance, Florida Children Services Council, Tampa Bay Water, CapMetro, Austin, Tx.
	Non-profit entities	Children's Home of Tampa, YMCA of Tampa, House Next Door, Deland, Family Resources, St. Petersburg, Spring of Tampa Bay, Family Counseling Services of Miami, Glades Initiative of Belle Glade, The Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County, Hillsborough Kids Inc of Tampa, ARC of Palm Beach County, Non-profit Resource Center of Palm Beach, School Readiness Coalition of Palm Beach, WestCare of Las Vegas, Mental Health Cares, Tampa, Tampa Bay 211, Clearwater
Strategic Business Plans	Business plans to implement strategic plans	Palm Coast, Round Rock, Tx; DeLand, Orlando, Children's Trust of Miami-Dade, Children's Board of Hillsborough County, Pompano Beach, Lee County, Polk County

Strategy Development Projects	Project Description	Client*
Strategic Goal Setting - One or two year plans that address key issues	Public sector entities	Temple Terrace, Belleair Beach, West Park, Broward County, Volusia County, City of Sarasota, Lakeland, Winter Haven, Lake Wales, Osceola County, Winter Park, Brevard County, Martin County, Davie, Palm Beach School Board, Riviera Beach, Belle Glade, Polk County, Hollywood (FL), Casselberry, Callaway, Coral Springs Community Development District, Lauderdale Lakes, N. Ft Lauderdale, Ocala, Port St. Lucie Service District, Sarasota County, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Cooper City
Strategic Plans	Non-profit entities	Chamber of Commerce of DeLand, Florida After-School Network, Duvall House of Volusia County, Grace Lutheran of Winter Haven, MHC of Tampa Children's Home of Tampa, YMCA of Tampa, House Next Door, Deland, Family Resources, St. Petersburg, Spring of Tampa Bay, Family Counseling Services of Miami, Glades Initiative of Belle Glade, The Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County, Hillsborough Kids Inc. of Tampa, ARC of Palm Beach County, Non-profit Resource Center of Palm Beach, School Readiness Coalition of Palm Beach, WestCare of Las Vegas, Mental Health Cares, Tampa Bay 211, Georgia Developmental Disabilities Council.
Economic Development	Economic strategic plan	City of Daytona Beach, Economic Council of Sarasota County, Glades region of Palm Beach County, Madison County; Gadsden County; Hamilton County; Suwannee County, Lee County
	Economic Development Organizational study	Volusia County
	Economic development summits	Round Rock, Tx; Palm Beach County, Lee County, Charlotte County, Jacksonville
Tourism Development	Strategic Plan	Greater Lake Okeechobee Tourism Alliance, Volusia ECHO Tourism Alliance; Element in Daytona Beach ED Plan
	Annual strategic goals	Tourist Development Council, Lee County; Tourism Development Council, Palm Beach County
	Community Perceptions Survey	S. Walton Tourist Development Council

Strategy Development Projects	Project Description	Client*
Downtown Redevelopment	Downtown Redevelopment Plan	City of Cape Coral; Fort Walton Beach, Margate; City of Cocoa
	Downtown Redevelopment Strategic Plan	City of Tallahassee
	Downtown Redevelopment Plan	City of St. Petersburg
	Strategic Plan	Florida Redevelopment Association
Community Development	Strategic Plan	Polk County Opportunity Council
	Strategic Plan	Glades Initiative
Public Safety & Criminal Justice	Evaluation of Criminal Justice Commission	Palm Beach Criminal Justice Commission
	Police Department Operational Issues Analysis	City of Belle Glade
	Strategic Plan, Law Enforcement	City of DeLand, City of Round Rock, TX
	Strategic Plan, Fire and EMS	Palm Beach County, Polk County
	Criminal Justice, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Strategic Plan	Palm Beach County, FL; Citrus County, FL
	Community Violence Prevention Strategic Plan	Hillsborough County
	Strategic Plan	Palm Beach Criminal Justice Commission
Health and Human Services	Organizational design and strategic plan	Health and Human Services Planning Council, Pinellas County
	Homeless strategic plan	Pinellas County
	Development of community health indicators	Martin County, St. Johns County
	Analysis of strategic focus areas	Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
Education	Alternative governance structures for a school district	Charleston Education Alliance
	Education Vision Plan	Palm Beach Directions 94
	Annual Goal Setting	Palm Beach County School Board
	Strategic plan	Stetson University School of Business, Palm Beach Community College Institute of Government, Florida After-School Network
	Community literacy	United Way of Polk County
	Pre-K Policy	School Readiness Partnership of Florida

Strategy Development Projects	Project Description	Client*
Transportation and Public Utilities	Transportation Summit	Palm Beach County
	Organizational development	Palm Beach County Water Utilities
	Strategic Plan	Florida Stormwater Utilities Association, Governmental Utilities Group, Cap Metro, Austin, TX, Polk County
	Transportation for Economic Development	Hillsborough County
Charter Reviews	Facilitation of charter review commissions	Brevard County, Polk County, Volusia County
Environmental Issues	Sustainable water supply via regional solutions	Tampa Bay Water Coordinating Council, Volusia Water Alliance, Southwest Florida Water Alliance, Brushy Creek Water Authority,
	Land use	Sarasota Vision 2050; South Florida Water Management District
	Compatible economic development	Key Largo
	Stormwater	Southeast Stormwater Association
	Conservation Lands policy	Lee County
Analytics	Nature of the Project	Client*
	Assessment of health and human services	St. Johns County
	Analysis of social service alternative structures	Polk County
	Assessment of youth programs	St. Petersburg
	Analysis of senior needs	N. Miami, Cutler Bay
	Development of a cost-sharing and reimbursement model for City and County fire services	Alachua County, City of Gainesville
	Assessment of small business satisfaction	South FL Water Management District
	An assessment of homeless issues and services	Pinellas County
	An analysis of the economic impacts of investment in early childhood services	Collier County

Analytics	Nature of the Project	Client*
	An analysis of the system impacts of mental health and substance abuse on criminal justice services	Citrus County, Palm Beach County
	An analysis of housing issues for persons with HIV/AIDS	Treasure Coast Health Planning Council
	An examination of mental health services in Dade County	Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services
	A health services needs assessment	Palm Beach County, St. Johns County
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Florida unless noted otherwise

Experience with destination marketing organizations or visitor industry related business

Analytica's experience with destination marketing organizations or visitor industry related business has occurred primarily through Tourist Development Councils or Local Governments which have such entities under contract for services. From this perspective they have provided information and perspectives about trends which have been valuable in the strategic planning process.

Other business interests of Analytica's principal, Herb Marlowe, are directly engaged in a visitor industry related business as a former owner of short-term rentals for equestrian and sports event visitors in Alachua and Marion counties. This experience of developing collaborative marketing strategies as well as managing visitor rentals provides an on-the-ground perspective of some of the challenges involved in the visitor industry.

Reference list of previous similar projects

City of DeLand FL Strategic Plan. Michael Pleuss, City Manager, 386 626 7109
City of Fort Walton Beach Strategic Plan. Michael Beedie, City Manager, 850 833 9504
City of Round Rock, TX Strategic Plan, Jim Nuse, City Manager, 512 748 7590
City of Pompano Beach FL Strategic Plan, Brian Donovan, Assistant City Manager, 954 786 4601
Hillsborough County Strategic Plan, Eric Johnson, Director of Strategic Planning, 813 774 2476

Sample agenda/proposed format

Focus group example

Introductions

Purpose of the Focus Group; how this information and discussion will impact the strategic plan

Potential Questions (facilitation process will ensure each participant responds and no one person dominates)

- What is the most frequent comment you hear from visitors?
- From the visitor's perspective, is there a feature they view as missing? Is there something they want that they can't get in the county? What are the weaknesses that should be addressed?
- Are there features of the county which could draw visitors but are overlooked or underemphasized?
- Who does Santa Rosa compete with for tourists? What competitive advantage does Santa Rosa have? What are the assets that could be built upon?
- How is the business changing and what opportunities will emerge?

Retreat example

Introductions

Purpose

Discussion of scenarios

- What is your preferred scenario? (This may be a combination of the presented scenarios)
Note: In strategic planning terminology, this exercise articulates the vision.

Areas to develop or strengthen

- To continue or strengthen progress on our preferred scenario, where should we focus our time and resources?

Note: In strategic planning terminology, this exercise articulates the goals.

For each area we have identified that we need to develop or strengthen

- The specific accomplishment(s) we should pursue are....?

Note: In strategic planning terminology, this exercise articulates the strategies and objectives

For each accomplishment,

- How can we judge progress?

Note: In strategic planning terminology, this exercise articulates the measurable element.

Outline of work proposed, including a timeline of preparation, execution and final report

The RFP delineated the following scope of work which we have reformatted as a set of tasks. For each task we have described our approach, the time frame and the deliverable.

- **Task 1.0. Facilitate two focus group sessions** to serve as a forum for stakeholders, board members and key staff participants to engage in meaningful conversations about current state of the hospitality industry, board governance objectives, board/staff relations and other topics related to organizational development. One session for North End Committee and one session for South End Committee.
 - Task 1.1. Development of Structured Interview Protocol in collaboration with the TDC Director. The Structured Interview Protocol is designed to ensure a comprehensive and in-depth discussion that generates a complete set of perspectives while controlling for various forms of potential bias that could lead to inaccurate or erroneous conclusions. Appendix A provides an example of a focus group protocol. Appendix B describes the approach Analytica has developed to mitigate bias. Appendix C describes the Structured Interview Protocol in some detail.
 - Task 1.2. Selection of focus group participants. For the focus group to be most effective the diversity of perspectives that are present in the stakeholder community

should be present. Hoteliers, Visitor rental providers, campsite operators, tourism attractions (public and private), related service industries (visitor-oriented restaurants, retail, health care), public work services, and residents who are impacted by tourism along should be considered along with any other specific groups. This would include selection of substitutes in case of last minute events.

- Task 1.3. Logistical preparation. This includes site selection, time selection, notification and verification processes.
- Task 1.4. Focus group facilitation.
- Task 1.5. Summary of discussion

Time Frame: Month 1 of project

Deliverable: Summary report delineating the perspectives of the focus group participants on the questions which were posed. Example questions will be found in Appendix as well as in the agenda sample provided below.

- **Task 2.0. Facilitate a board workshop/planning session** with Santa Rosa County Tourist Development Council Board of Directors and Tourist Development Office Staff
 - Task 2.1. Preparation of Strategic Choices Report. This report will include the information derived from the focus groups, data about tourism trends relevant to Santa Rosa County, two or more scenarios which depict various directions tourism could take in the county, and a set of key decisions which will set that direction. These decisions may be framed as a set of goals to be chosen or not and to be prioritized.
 - Task 2.2. Review of the Strategic Choices Report with the TDC Executive Director and other key persons. This review will identify any gaps, points that may need clarification or expansion and any other changes that will make it a more usable document for the workshop.
 - Task 2.3. Distribution to workshop participants prior to the session for review.
 - Task 2.4. Workshop facilitation. Please refer to the agenda section for an example of the topics the session could address.
 - Task 2.5. Summary report and draft plan. Based on the workshop direction, a draft plan will be developed.

Time Frame: Months 2 & 3

Deliverable: Draft Strategic Plan

- **Task 3.0. Conduct any necessary follow-up meetings** with these groups
 - Task 3.1. If follow-up meetings are needed they will be scheduled.

Time Frame: Months 2 & 3

Deliverable: Draft Strategic Plan Revisions

- **Task 4.0. Meet with Chairman and Tourist Development Director** to review plan and progress
 - Task 4.1. The draft plan will be provided to the Chairman and Tourist Development Director
 - Task 4.2. Meeting to review and finalize plan.
 - 4.2.1. One component of this meeting will be a discussion about what indicators will tell the Chair and Director that progress is being made toward the goals of the strategic plan.

Time Frame: Month 3

Deliverable: Draft Strategic Plan Revisions

- **Task 5.0. Develop quantitative objectives** necessary to measuring performance against the goals of the plan.
 - Task 5.1. Drawing upon the 4.2.1 discussion, a set of quantitative objectives will be developed.
 - Task 5.2. Review draft quantitative objectives with TDC Director.
 - Task 5.3. Finalize quantitative objectives.

Time Frame: Month 3

Deliverable: Draft Strategic Plan Quantitative Objectives

- **Task 6.0. Provide a final report and presentation** to the Santa Rosa County Tourist Development Council, Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners and Tourist Development Office
 - Task 6.1. Develop draft presentation and review with TDC Director
 - Task 6.2. Make presentation.

Time Frame: Month 3 or 4

Deliverable: Strategic Plan presentation

Fee structure

Task #	Sub-task	Task	Fee	Out of Pocket Estimate	On-site days
1		Focus Groups			
	1.1	Protocol development	500	0	0
	1.2	Participant selection	0	0	0
	1.3	Logistical preparation	0	0	0
	1.4	Focus group facilitation	3000	500	2
	1.5	Summary	500	0	0
2		Planning Workshop			
	2.1	Strategic Choices Report	2000	0	0
	2.2	Review with TDC Director	0	0	0
	2.3	Distribution & feedback	0	0	0
	2.4	Workshop facilitation	3000	500	2
	2.5	Summary & Draft Plan	1000	0	0
3		Follow up meetings			
	3.1	Follow up meetings	0	0	0
		Given that the need for this task is unknown, it is not budgeted. If you wish to budget for it we can assume two days on site at a fee of \$1,500 per day and travel			
4		Chair and Director Meeting			
	4.1	Chair and Director Meeting	1500	400	1
5		Quantitative Objectives			
	5.1	Development of quantitative objectives	1000	0	0
	5.2	Review	0	0	0
	5.3	Finalize	0	0	0
6		Presentation & Report			
	6.1	Presentation(s)	3000	500	2
			15500	1900	7

Appendix A: Example Focus Group Protocol

Preferred Size: 8 to 12 persons

Staffing:

Facilitator

Recorder

Facility:

- Table configuration where participants can speak to each other as well as to facilitator.
- Screen for projection of questions, materials and live notes.

Amenities:

- Refreshments appropriate to the time of day.

Process:

1. Overview of process and purpose
2. Introduction of people in the room and their role
3. Posing of question 1
 - a. Facilitated discussion ensuring each participant expresses their view
 - b. Obtaining preference data if appropriate once all perspectives have been aired or
 - c. Obtaining prioritization preferences; or
 - d. Obtaining system analysis or gap data if that is the purpose
4. Questions 2 N
5. Review of major themes
6. Feedback from participants on any other topics they thought relevant
7. Review of how the information will be used.

Appendix B: Identifying and Controlling for Sources of Bias & Error in Focus Group Assessment Research

Herbert A. Marlowe, Jr
Working Paper: Not for Distribution

June 15, 2000

Introduction

Focus group assessment, as with any other form of scientific research, is concerned with the control of error or bias. Error or bias introduces non-controlled forms of variation which may skew results. While in a perfect world, all error could be eliminated, in the real world of focus group assessments that will never occur. There are too many sources of variation, and too few ways to eliminate it. What we can do is to identify those sources and seek to minimize their impact both through design and analysis. This paper provides a brief overview of the forms of bias and then presents methods for controlling and/or minimizing bias.

Sources of Bias or Error

- *Selection Error.* Selection error occurs when people are selected for the focus groups on some variable other than the ones identified before-hand as variables to test. When that occurs, we cannot determine if the results were due to pre-identified variables or due to the "hidden" or "unknown" variable that influenced selection.
- *Method Error.* Method error occurs when there is a significant variation in focus group method. If focus groups are conducted one way one time, and another way another time, then the question may be legitimately asked, "are the differences between groups due to the actual thoughts of the group, or due to the different method used to obtain the data. Method error confounds results by making it unclear what impact differing methods had on the results.
- *Moderator Personality/Style Bias.* Moderator's obviously differ in style and personality. When these differ significantly, they introduce a confounding variable into the assessment.
- *Expectancy Bias.* Participants may have varying expectations of the purpose or task of the focus group. This can lead to response variance due to expectancy gaps that is not truly reflective of the participant's view or opinion of the test materials. The focus group designer must also be careful not to create expectations that inadvertently shape responses.

- *Item order effect.* If the focus group is testing reactions to different items, then the order of item presentation can influence response if not controlled for in some way.
- *Respondent Order Effect.* In response bias, error is introduced by respondents self-selecting a response "pecking order" in which certain participants "go first" and others "go last"
- *Dominance bias.* In a focus group setting an extremely verbal or dominant personality can influence group responses if not controlled for in some way.
- *Shyness bias.* The opposite of dominance bias, shyness bias refers to the behavior of some persons to be very quiet in group settings and to not initiate participation in discussions.
- *Acquaintance bias.* Is it possible that individuals who know each other may influence each other's responses. If this occur, acquaintance bias would occur.
- *Stranger bias.* While acquaintance bias can occur, in actuality stranger bias can also occur. While not as obvious, this may occur in the form of some participants being reluctant to speak in the presence of strangers or some participants making stronger statements than they actually hold simply because there is no one in the group who "knows" them.
- *Idiosyncratic error.* This source of error is a result of transient individual participant experiences which may color their responses. Someone having a "bad" day for example may give exaggerated responses simply as a mechanism for venting frustration or anger at a totally separate event.

Methods of Control

Selection Error.

- Selection error is best controlled by random selection of participants. Random selection prevents the inadvertent introduction of error through a skewed selection.

Method Error

To minimize method bias a number of options are available. In order of descending strength they are:

- Develop structured and detailed protocols in which all moderators are trained. This prevents significant variation in method.
- Have trained moderators, all of whom share a common training background.
- Have a general protocol which covers desired results and key points.

Moderator/Personality Style Bias

This form of bias will never be eliminated. However, the mechanisms which can be used to minimize this form of bias include:

- Where feasible, use the same moderator for all focus groups. This solution at least ensures that the moderator impact is approximately the same for all groups.
- Where multiple moderators are used, provide a detailed protocol and structure so that individual personality differences do not result in different methods.
- Attempt a post-facto analysis to determine if there seem to be any patterns of response that are particularly associated with a particular moderator.

Expectancy Bias.

Expectancy bias can be controlled or minimized through the following steps:

- Standardization of any advertising or recruitment material;
- Use of a standard letter of acknowledgement of participation which creates a common expectation among participants
- Use of a standard opening statement by the moderator which clarifies process, role or item [as appropriate – if you are testing for initial reactions you do not want to create expectations or shape responses]

Item order effect.

Item order bias can be controlled by systematically varying the presentation order so that no item is always presented at a certain point.

Respondent Order Effect

Response bias can be systematically controlled by systematically varying the order in which participants speak in a structured interview. In a non-structured interview, it is very difficult to control for response bias. A post-facto analysis can be conducted to determine if the participants tended to respond in a particular order. If they did not, one can argue that response bias did not occur. If they did respond in a particular order, the researcher has to acknowledge that a confounding variable has been introduced.

Dominance bias.

Dominance bias is controlled via a structured interview process in which each respondent is allocated a fixed amount of time to respond in a clear sequence. This controls both time of speech [one form of dominance] and speaking sequence [another form of dominance is speaking frequently, out of turn, or interrupting another speaker]

Shyness bias.

The opposite of dominance bias is shyness bias where a member does not speak in any regular or systematic manner. Again, the structured interview process minimizes shyness bias by providing each participant a time slot in which to speak so that they do not have to compete for the floor or attempt to gain the attention of the moderator.

Acquaintance bias.

Acquaintance bias can be controlled through a variety of tools.

- One, given sufficient time and participant pool, a screening criteria can be that the participant know no one else in the group. While theoretically sound, this is difficult to achieve in practice either because it is difficult to monitor or because in smaller or rural communities it may be a practical impossibility.
- Two, use of a structured interview protocol minimizes the impact of acquaintance by forcing each individual to respond to the moderator and not to one another [unless that is part of the research design].
- Third, post-facto analysis can determine the impact of acquaintance if there is a concern that acquaintance bias may have occurred. The first step in post-facto analysis is to remove either the acquainted individuals or the entire focus group from the quantitative analysis. If the data patterns remain the same after their removal, then acquaintance had no impact on overall results. If the quantitative patterns do vary, then the next step would be to remove either the acquainted persons from the analysis or the entire focus group. If upon removal, the same general data patterns remain as were found when they were included, then one can safely conclude that acquaintance bias did not impact the results in any significant manner. If a different data pattern is found, then the data can be segregated and separate analyses conducted.

Stranger bias.

Control of stranger bias is more difficult because it is more difficult to detect. Initial detection can be done by either the moderator or the transcript reviewer but it is much easier to the moderator to see it in action. Stranger bias is indicated whenever one person consistently responds in the same form to another, i.e. they always agree, they always disagree, etc.

Idiosyncratic bias.

This cannot be controlled for ahead of time. It can be minimized by use of structured interview protocols which do not allow the person to "get off track" and into a discussion of their particular issue.

Appendix C: Focus Group Methodology: The Structured Interview Process

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Focus group moderators utilize a variety of specific methods to obtain their data. Each method has its own strengths and weaknesses and is appropriate in certain settings, inappropriate in others. This paper introduces one method, the Structured Interview Process. The method is described and its strengths and weaknesses listed.

Description of the Method

The Structured Interview Process conducts a focus group using highly defined protocols. These protocols include:

1. Delineation of framework setting via standardized introductory comments. This creates a common set of expectations for participants, thereby reducing expectancy error.
2. Specification of questions, including specific phaseology. This ensures each participant is asked the same question. This reduces method error, moderator bias, acquaintanceship bias and stranger bias.
3. Delineation of item presentation sequence. This ensures that both order effect and moderator bias is minimized.
4. Delineation of participant response sequence. This ensures respondent and moderator bias is minimized as well as dominance bias.
5. Possible use of quantitative questions. This promotes data triangulation and serves as a test of internal reliability of the data. It also serves to minimize moderator bias.
6. Delineation of time frames for item and respondent. This minimizes dominance bias as well as moderator bias.

Advantages

The advantages of the Structured Interview Process include:

Advantage:	Discussion:
Strong control of various forms of bias	Structured interviews control or minimize expectancy error, method error, moderator bias, acquaintanceship bias, stranger bias, order effect, respondent order effect.
Data Triangulation	The strongest forms of data triangulation involves three different data types. Use of structured interviews facilitates quantitative data collection and systematic moderator data which adds two different data types to qualitative participant data

Ease of multiple site, multiple group administration	This process is easier to administer across multiple sites or groups. It ensures moderators are following similar steps.
Data Analysis is facilitated.	A structured interview facilitates data analysis by pre-designing the data set.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages of the Structured Interview Process include:

Disadvantage:	Discussion
Potential creativity limitations	If the purpose of the focus group is to facilitate group creative thinking on a topic, and then later draw ideas from that discussion, a structured interview will probably inhibit the needed free flow of ideas. If the goal is creativity or random ideas, other group processes such as brainstorming or various thinking exercises are more appropriate.
Participant Reaction	Some participants may not like structured formats. Those persons who want to express themselves as "they feel like it" will probably feel constrained. If the group is pre-identified as consisting of those types of persons, a more semi-structured interview protocol may be appropriate.
Off-target questions can be generated and asked if pre-design work is not done properly.	The Structured Interview Process requires careful pre-design, particularly in its questions. If the wrong questions are asked, the desired data will not be generated.

Alternatives to the Structured Interview Process

There are a variety of alternatives to the Structured Interview Process. These include:

- **Semi-Structured Interviews.** Semi-structured interviews provide an overall framework but allow the moderator greater flexibility to respond to group dynamics.
- **Creative Thinking Groups.** The purpose of these groups is to generate creative thinking on a topic. They use a variety of techniques such as brainstorming, poster notes, visualization, etc.
- **Electronic.** Electronic focus groups use interactive software technology to either generate ideas or evaluate materials. They advantage is they can eliminate dominance, acquaintanceship or stranger bias.
- **Free form Interviews.** In this form the moderator follows the flow of the group as they respond to items.
- **Quantitative based.** These forms are highly similar to Structured Interviews in that respondents complete and then elaborate upon their responses to a series of quantitative items.